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admired General Knapp's sword, and after his death Mrs. Knapp sold it to one of the officers, not realizing how her sons would like to have kept it. One of them tried to repurchase it from the officer, but was not able to do so.

Among the frequent visitors were Black Hawk and his son Nasheakusk, who was then about the age of Jonas and John Knapp, and liked to come and play with them. Black Hawk liked to talk with the General, but did not often condescend to talk with the boys. Occasionally, however, he would take notice of them and tell them of the arts of hunting game and stories of the chase and of war. He was not above coming around to the back door to ask for food.

On January 2, 1837, a "Reception and New Year's Ball" was given for General Knapp at the Assembly Room in the Madison House. During these festivities he caught a cold and died two days later of quinsy. His grave marked by a monument is in the south-east corner of the cemetery at Fort Madison, he being the first person buried there.

HENRY E. KNAPP.

THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE VALE

On September 25, 1918, there died in Brooklyn, New York, an author whose connection with Wisconsin is known to but few at the present time. William S. Pitts was born in Orleans County, New York, in 1830. In 1847 he came with his parents to Rock County, Wisconsin. Here he married ten years later, and Rock County continued to be his home until the early sixties, when he removed to Chickasaw County, Iowa, where most of the remainder of his life was passed. A few years before his removal to Iowa there had been begun at Bradford, Chickasaw County, a simple village church. But for Dr. Pitts its history would have possessed nothing to distinguish it from hundreds of other rural frontier churches. But greatness such as its founders never dreamed of has been thrust upon it, for about it Dr. Pitts wrote the song, "The Little Brown Church in the Vale," which has gone round the world and is sung wherever the English language is known.

Dr. Pitts first visited Bradford in June, 1857. No church was there then, but the "vale" was waiting to receive one, and the visitor



THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH IN THE VALE
From a photograph in the Wisconsin Historical Library

from Wisconsin was attracted by the pristine loveliness of the spot, as yet untouched by the hand of civilization. "This portion of the Cedar Valley will always be beautiful," he wrote forty years later, "but it was doubly so then. Even now, after the lapse of so many years, I can see the cornhills left by the Indians when they journeyed toward the setting sun, the natural oaks, the greensward, the flowers, the prairie to the east, the woodland to the west, and the Little Cedar River running like a thread of silver through the valley."

When back in his Wisconsin home Dr. Pitts wrote the song which has made him famous, and laid the manuscript away. Several years later he followed his wife's people to Fredericksburg, Chickasaw County, Iowa, which became his home for half a century. Meanwhile a young preacher, the Reverend J. K. Nutting, had come to Bradford to assume pastoral care of the infant Congregational Church Society, which with no church building was worshipping in lawyers' offices, hotel dining rooms, and even in an abandoned store-room with doors and windows gone. The outbreak of war in 1861 delayed the building of the church so that not until December, 1864, was it ready for dedication. Fredericksburg, which had become the home of Dr. Pitts, was a neighboring town a few miles away, and in the winter of 1863-64 he conducted a singing school at Bradford. Near its close one evening in the spring, the class went out to the still unfinished church. The leader had with him the manuscript of the song, written in Wisconsin several years before, and now carried by the author to the very spot where he had received the inspiration which evoked it; and for the first time it was sung (other than by the author himself) by the class, seated on rude seats which had been temporarily improvised.

Not long after this Dr. Pitts took his manuscript to Chicago, where it was published by H. M. Riggins, and thus was launched its career which has since become world-wide. Pleasant it is to be able to record that in this case, at least, the prophet has not gone unhonored in his own community. Bradford, which half a century ago was a thriving town with dreams of future greatness far in excess of its present achievement, has been for a generation a decaying village, the process of reversion to open farmland being now almost completed. The death stroke was given the place when the

Illinois Central Railway, reaching out from Chicago to St. Paul, passed it by at a distance of some three miles. With the decay of the village the church organization disintegrated until in time it ceased to exist. But the church itself had become hallowed in the affections of the community, and two decades ago a "Society for the Preservation of the Little Brown Church" came into existence. The church is lovingly maintained by the citizens of the vicinity and has become in course of time a shrine of history and of sentiment to an ever widening constituency. In recent years an annual "Brown Church Reunion" has been held, on or about June 15, which draws old-time friends of the church and residents of the vicinity from long distances. In June, 1916, Reverend Nutting, builder of the church, and Dr. Pitts, the song writer, were brought from their distant homes (the one in Florida, the other in New York) to grace the reunion. Reverend Nutting gave an address and Dr. Pitts sang the song he had written almost sixty years before. Reverend Nutting died the next year at the age of eighty-five, Dr. Pitts following him a year later at the age of eighty-nine.

Dr. Pitts was a man greatly beloved by his home community. Church and song alike are numbered among the spiritual possessions of Iowa. But Wisconsin produced the singer; in his Rock County home the song was written, and here for several years it slumbered in obscurity, unknown to all the world save its author. This brief chronicle has been written chiefly as a deserved tribute to a worthy son of Wisconsin; in part, with the hope that those who take pride in the literary achievements of Badgerdom will not permit its share of ownership in the fame of Dr. Pitts and his beautiful song to be forgotten.